INFIRMITY
Inducing to
CONFORMITY:

OR,

A Scourge for impudent Usurpers;

AND,

A Cordiall for impotent Christians.

Preached not long since in St. *Peter's* the *Poore*, *Broad-street*, *London*; and in St. *Pancras* Church-yard when it could not be admitted into the Church. *July* 8. 1649.

BY

PETER BALES, Master in Arts; and a persecuted Minister of the holy Word and Sacraments.

PROV. 24. 15, 16.

Lay no wait (ô wicked man!) against the house of the righteous; and spoyle not his resting place:

Ver. 16. *For, a just man falleth seven times and riseth up againe.*

TERTUL.

Conditio presentium temporum provocat hanc admonitionem nostram.

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BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

To all Royall and Loyall Englishmen, &c.

Sirs,

THE Nos Omnes, *in my* Text, *hath brought me to* Vos omnes *with this charitateous Present; which, in all humility, and some confidence of your favourable acceptation and construction, (having already experimentally found your benevolence and bounty towards me and wine) I doe now tender to your religious consideration: To you (I say) doth this my poore labour properly belong, who are so endowed with the grace of* God, *as to go out of your selves, that* Jesus *may enter in; to exinanite your selves, that you may partake of the fulnesse of* Christ; *knowing, that all your Perfection (as Saint* Jerome *saith) consists in acknowledging your owne Imperfection. As for* self-applauding Usurpers, *and* self-justifying unjust Ones, *who doe* measure themselves with themselves, *neither my* Text, *nor this* treatised Sermon *doth appertaine unto them; unlesse to be as a* whip *to lash them, I am certaine, not as a* cordiall *to comfort them. There is but one* truth, *yet encountred with as many* falshoods *as there were gobbets and shreds of dismembred* Pentheus; *and surely, never with more, in this* quondam *flourishing* Church, *then in these our dayes, when and where giddy-headed Phantasie and ambitious Liberty doe most imperiously oversway the Judgment, and overthrow the Law.*

Sirs, I am not Dominis Arrisor, *neither* Ecclesiæ aut Reipublicæ Arrosor, *I neither faune upon my* Masters, *nor devoure the* Church *or* Common-wealth: *But I beseech you by the meekness and gentlenesse of* Christ, Doe not dare to make your selves of the number, or to compare your selves to them which praise themselves; yet they understand not that they measure themselves with themselves, and compare themselves with themselves, 2 *Cor.* 10. 12. Ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἑαυτοὺς μετροῦντες, in se seipsos metiuntur, *in themselves they measure themselves, that is, through a vaine persuasion of their owne excellency they arrogate to themselves more than is meet and right.*

The humility of the mind, is the sublimity of a Christian; *and the more vile and base we are in our owne eyes, the more glorious are we in Gods account.*

God made the Heavens before the Earth: but Man must lay his foundation first in the Earth (in rightly weighing the ponderousnesse of his depraved disposition, and terrene affection) before ever he shall come to Heaven. Let humility (therefore) be nourished by you: First, by the assiduity of Subjection. Secondly, by the meditation of sublime matters. Lastly, by the daily and serious consideration of your owne frailty: So, shall you not be many Masters, and then your commendation (not condemnation) will be the greater. For, In many things we offend all.

Deare Friends *and* Christians, *Though we all offend in many things; I have not wittingly and willingly offended (in this discourse) God or Good-men in any thing. I use not prodigall of pompous wit, or choice of words, where may be absurdities and literall faults: if there be, I crave your friendly pardon and pretermission, and for the substance your courteous acceptance: God grant it may be as profitable unto you, as it was intended for you.* Amen.

Your poore Servant, in,

and for the Lord Jesus,

PETER BALES.

INFIRMITY
Inducing to
CONFORMITY.

S^t. IAM. 3. part of the 2. v.
In many things wee offend all.

HEre is a *Text* of holy *Scripture* whereunto all Licentious *Libertines*, Independent *Usurpers*, and Prophane *Atheists* doe (though most unjustly) lay a peculiar claime; that it might be as a *Covert* to hide, or a *Paraſite* to palliate all their Diabolicall *Stratagems*, Machiavellian *Deſignes*, and moſt Deteſtable *Abominations*; viz: *Eccleſ.* 7. *v.* 18. *Be not thou juſt overmuch.*

And there is a *place* of holy *Scripture* wherein all *God's* deare *Children* have a due *intereſt* and a juſt *right* and *title*; which is as a *ſcourge* to correct, or a *two-edged Sword* to confound all their Enemies, and a comfortable *Directory* for themſelves: *Jam.* 3. 2. *In multis offendimus omnes.* (i.e.) *In many things we offend all.*

Petrus Tovvrin Archbiſhop of *Toledo*, having a long time conſidered the weighty reaſons on each ſide, whether *Solomon* was damned, or ſaved; in fine (remaining ſtill doubtfull of the truth hereof) cauſed him to be painted in his Chappel half in Heaven, and half in Hell: Whether this Father deſerved, for this

this his uncharitable incredulity, commendation or condemnation, let all good Men judge: Yet, am I confident, that I shall not deserve any blame if I should pourtray a good Christian half in Heaven and half on Earth: Halfe in Heaven; by reason of his regenerate part; devout orisons, divine contemplation, and heavenly conversation: Half on Earth; in regard of his naturall part; inherent corruption, Sathan's suggestion, and the world's infection: A Child of God being like unto Saint *Anselm's* Bird soaring with winged swiftnesse towards Heaven; but being tied (by the Shepherd's wanton Boy) to an heavie stone with a long string, was forcibly brought downe to the Earth againe. We are prest and ready to flie (as it were) to doe the Will of our heavenly Father, when we have tasted the first fruits of the Spirit; but immediately are pull'd downe again to our owne earthly imaginations and sinfull affections, by the stone-weight of our owne depraved nature: *Πολλὰ γὰρ πταίομεν ἅπαντες. For, in many things we offend all.*

Which words doe afford us Two generall parts:

I. The first is the *Delictum*, or Offence: Aggravated,

First, by its perennity or assiduity: It is not said, we have offended, or shall offend; but, we doe offend: like a quotidian Ague, it takes and shakes us every day.

Secondly, by its multiplicity: it cannot say as *Elijah* did, *I am left alone, and they seek my life: Non in paucis, sed in multis*, not in a few things, but in many things we doe offend.

II. The second mentioneth the Delinquents or Offenders: Described,

First, by a plurall Personality and a gracious affinity both in respect of God and themselves. *Nos*, We.

Secondly, by their Generallity, not partially but universally expressed, *Omnes*, All. *Et qui dicit omnes excludit neminem*, and in saying [all] he excepts or exempts none at all, from offending, and that in many things. *In multis offendimus omnes*, (i. e.) *In many things we offend all.*

Which Text is as an eye in the head wherewith we may see our owne Deformity: Or as a tongue in the head by which we

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may and must confesse our manifold infirmities and shortcomings. It is as a Garden full of sweet flowers intermixt with many and diverse stinking weeds. It is as a flourishing Vine laden with sowre grapes, which (by God's assistance) shall gratifie, that with the juice of them your appetites may be more and more sharpened to eate and digest the true bread of life.

Begin we therefore with the first generall part of my Text, which is, the *Delictum* or *Offence*.

The vulgar Latine translates the originall word, *Offendimus*, we *offend*, or *stumble*. Sinne (indeed) is *offendiculum*, a stumbling stone, or block of offence; and it lieth in our way, which way soever we turne our selves; so that if we stumble not upon it, but misse it; it was the grace of God that upheld us, and gave us warning of it, that we might have the more free progresse in our journey to the heavenly *Canaan*. Sin offendeth God, our selves, and our Neighbours.

First, it offendeth God, who is Holinesse it selfe, and therefore cannot but abominate it in his Creatures. It caused him to repent *that he had made Adam, and to be sorry at his very heart*, Gen. 6. Yea, sinne is so offensive to him, that nothing but the merits and intercession of his beloved Sonne, and our alone Saviour, Jesus Christ, can appease his wrath, and turne away his displeasure towards us.

Secondly, it offendeth our selves, and that, First, in respect of the new man or regenerate part; *If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out*, Mat. 5. 29. whose by the eye, hand and foot, our Saviour meaneth the lusts of the flesh and the concupiscence of the old man, which doe often molest and offend the new man, in its running in the path of God's commandements. Secondly, in respect of the Conscience, every sinne is a sickenesse, and a losse. It is *flagellum mentis*, yea, *mentis mors*, as Saint Bernard calls it, the scourge of the soule, and death of the soule. When the conscience is throughly awakened for sinne, it casteth the soule into many pangs and throwes, and leaves it void of all comfort, till Christ Jesus brings it into his wine-cellar of consolation, and spreads over it the banner of his love. If he doth not, it proves not only an Accuser and a Judge, but an Executioner also.

Thirdly, it offendeth our Neighbours: it made the holy Prophet *David* complain bitterly in his abode with incorrigible, implacable, and prophane Persons, *Psal.* 120. *Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Meseck, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar: My soule hath long dwelt with those that are Enemies unto peace.* The Sodomits unlawfull deeds vexed *Lot*'s righteous soule from day to day, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7, 8. And these five severall waies, especially doe we offend our Neighbours: 1. By evill example. 2. By evill counsell. 3. By base detraction. 4. By false doctrine. 5. By the abuse of Christian liberty. *Let* therefore *our light so shine before men, that they seeing our good works, may glorifie our Father which is in Heaven,* Mat. 5. 16. *Let us* with Saint *Paul, therein exercise our selves to have alwaies a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward Men,* Act. 24. 16. *Let us give no offence neither to the Jewes, nor to the Grecians, nor to the Church of God,* 1 Cor. 10. 32. In a word, Let us not doe any thing without Faith and Charity: Whosoever walketh according to this rule, *Peace shall be upon him, and upon the Israel of God.*

But, we doe not onely give, and take offence our selves, stumble our selves and make others stumble; but we also fall, and so our best Translation renders it, *In multis labimur omnes,* Πολλὰ πταίομεν, *We fall many waies.* This Fall is not corporall, but morall; yet by a Corporall we may understand a Morall fall; for as he that falleth, in regard of the sight of his body, commeth lower, and withall, ordinarily taketh a bruise; even so is it in a morall fall. Our nature by it becomes not onely more base and vile, but more feeble also: But this phrase importeth a difference of Sinners: some draw iniquity with the cords of vanity; others account it vanity, and doe feele vexation of spirit to be drawne into iniquity with cords: Some doe take pleasure in sinning; others doe esteem it a sinne to take pleasure therein: some doe sinne through malice; some through frailty: some commit sinne; some fall: They sinne through malice, in whom the principles of conscience are corrupt, who wittingly and willingly commit sinne with greedinesse: neither before the fact feeling any reluctancy, nor after the fact conceiving any sorrow. These account *darknesse, light; and light, darknesse; evill, good; and good, evill,* as the Prophet speaketh, *Isai.* 5. 20. It is improper to say

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that these doe fall into sinne; for, will any one of set purpose fall to hurt himselfe? To be overtaken in a fault, (which phrase Saint *Paul* useth to the Galatians, *Gal.* 6. 1.) is nothing else but this *falling* in my Text. The phrase reacheth onely those who sinne, *dum aut latet veritas, aut compellit infirmitas*, as venerable *Bede* speaketh, either when they are sophistically circumvented, or unawares transported, and so take a fall. *Let him* therefore *that thinks he stands to himselfe take heed lest he fall*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 12. For, it is not said, we have fallen, or shall fall; (though true enough) but, we doe; noting unto us the assiduity, or daily continuance of our falling; which is the first Particular of the first Generall, and comes now in order to be handled.

We doe continually sinne, even from the morning of our youth, to the evening of our old age: yea, from our very cradles, even unto our graves. Our life is a dying, and our dying is our life: Our breathing under Heaven is a breathing against Heaven, and we live not a day without sinne. *A just man* (saith *Salomon*, *Prov.* 26. 16. *falleth seven times*, yea, (*in a day*) every day. This is the common addition, frequent in the antient Fathers, though not found in the Originall. But, God himself saith, that *the imagination of mans heart is evill from his youth*, *Gen.* 8. 21. And (in *Gen.* 6. 5.) he saith, *The imaginations of the thoughts of his heart are onely evill continually*: The Hebrew renders it, *every day*. Should not this teach us all to be ready to forgive the frequent, continuall, and daily fallings, and offences of our Brethren?

Peter said unto our Saviour, *How often shall my Brother sinne against me, and I shall forgive him? unto seven times? Jesus said unto him, I say not to thee, Unto seven times! but, unto seventy times seven times.* Saint *Austine* makes this question upon these words, Why (saith he) doth our Saviour say, Seventy times seven times, and not an hundreth times eight times? The answer (saith he) is ready; From *Adam* to Christ were seventy Generations; therefore, as Christ forgave all the transgressions of whole mankind parted and diffused into so many Generations; so also we should remit as many offences, as, in the terme and compasse of our life, are committed against us.

Againe, what doth this teach us to act towards our selves? Surely, every day to examine our owne hearts in our chambers

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and to be still: To keep by us an Ephemerides of our thoughts, words, and deeds: To practice *Pythagoras* his golden verse and advise, Before (saith he) thou sufferest sleep to possesse thy tender eyes, aske thy soule thrice over, Τί παρέβην; τί δ' ἔρεξα; τί μοι δέον ἐτελέσθη; Whither have I gone? What have I done? What opportunity have I lost? Or, to imitate *Sextius*, who, when the day was past and the night come wherein he should take his rest, would aske his mind, What evill hast thou healed this day? What vice hast thou stood against? In what part art thou bettered? And then finding our fallings and offences, let us be instant in Prayer and Repentance: We doe continually offend our gracious God, making his displeasure to arise; let us therefore continually use the meanes which conduce to a Pacification, and that is, Prayer: He that prayeth most frequently is the best Christian, and hath the most interest in Heaven, He lives most comfortably, and dies most cheerfully. And being our whole life is a time of sinning; let us make our whole life a time of repenting. *Redeat homo, c. 7.* saith S. *Austine*, Let a man returne by daily lamentations to that from whence he is fallen by vaine delectations: Let not the Sunne set in Gods anger to night us: Let us not live a day longer before we begin to live indeed: Let us not climbe up into our beds, before we have climbed up into God's favour: Let not the eyes of our bodies be shut with sleep, before the eyes of our soules be opened by repentance. It would be (doubtlesse) a great deale of ease to our troubled spirits, if this our continuall offending were confined to some one pettie sinne, whereunto we are unwillingly carried, by our owne naturall concupiscence, provoking, by the Devils subtilty, perswading, and by the world's vanity, alluring; But, behold our wretched condition, by reason of sinnes multiplicity; which brings me to the second Particular of the first Generall: *viz.* We offend, *in multis*, in many things.

Multis modis offendimus, we doe offend a thousand waies: we run through more sinnes every day than there be signes in the Zodiarke: Our graces are in a Shekel; but our sins in an Ephah: Our graces are diminutives; but our sinnes are augmentatives. Sinne like heresie, is of an encroaching nature; as one heresie proveth another; so doth our sinne usher in another, the lesser

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alwaies making roome for the greater: Let us not therefore onely weigh our sinnes; but also number them: If they seem small, we cannot count them; for, as the Prophet *David* speaketh, *Psal.* 19. 12. *Who can understand his Errors?* or, *Who can tell how often he offendeth?* A negative interrogation is as much as an affirmative proposition, and an affirmative interrogation as much as a negative proposition: Who can tell how oft he offendeth? that is to say, not any one can tell; *viz.* if we consider the acts of sinne; but we may and must number the kinds of sinne, and ferret them out as so many *Achans*, by the poll. Consider (my Brethren) that we are guilty of sinnes of Omission, and Commission; of Ignorance, and Knowledge; of Weaknesse, and Wilfulnesse, &c. We sinne within us, and without us: Within us, by the Faculties of our soules, by the words of our mouth, and by the works of our hands.

1. We sinne in our Understanding, Will, Affections, and Passions.

2. In our Silence, and in our Speeches, whether Ordinary or Extraordinary, whether Civill or Sacred.

3. In our Actions, whether Passive or Active; and in Active, whether Naturall or Morall; and in Naturall, whether they be such as tend to our Being, or Wel-being: and in Morall, whether Politicall, or Ecclesiasticall. We sinne againe, by the outward Members of our bodies, as Feet, Hands, Eyes, and Eares, when we use them as members of unrighteousnesse. What shall I say? Doe we not *in many things* offend all? Surely, in our very best Actions we doe scatter many imperfections, and we faile, either in the end, matter, manner, or measure of our obedience. Should the Lord call us unto a strict triall, how ignorant would our knowledge be found? How fraile our faith? How wavering our hope? How proud our humility? How froward our patience? How cruell our mercies? How lukewarme our prayers? How superficiall our repentance? Alas! alas! Many are the infirmities of our soules, many the deformities of our lives; they are more in number than the haires of our heads, or the sands on the sea-shore; so that we may well say with *David*, *Psal.* 130. 3. *If thou, ô Lord! be extreame to marke what is done amisse, who can be able to stand?* Surely, that who, (saith Saint *Chrysostome*) is

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no body at all. Let us therefore (with *Martha*, though in another case) be much troubled for these many things, wherein we offend all; and (with *Mary*) chuse the better part, that shall never be taken from us, *Luke* 10. 41, 42. Yea, let us, who offend in many things, beware that we give not our selves the reins to offend in every thing: For, the Saints of God, though they doe offend *in multis*, yet, not *in omnibus*, though in many things, yet, not in all things: Wherefore, all things worke together for the best to them; but, *non ex ipsorum meritis*; *sed ex meâ ipsius misericordiâ*, not as flowing from the stinking puddle of their owne base merit, but, as issuing out of the cleer fountaine of God's free and meer mercy: For, *In many things we offend all.* Which brings me to the second Generall part; wherein I observed, the *Delinquents*, or *Offenders*, described two waies.

First, by a plurall personallity, and gracious affinity; both in respect of God and Themselves: *Nos*, We.

Secondly, by their generallity, not partially; but universally expressed: *Omnes*, All.

1. Begin we with the first, *Nos offendimus*, we offend. Are the KING-Deposing, King-Killing, ambitious, Jesuited Independents; the rigid, usurping Presbyterians; the love-sick Familists; the milk-white Brownists; the lawlesse Antinomians; the Saint-reigning Millenaries; free-willed Arminians; new-fangled, and schismatically intangled Reformers (I should have said Deformers); meritorious and supererrogatory Romanists, with many more, the like Offenders, comprehended: Are they (I say) comprehended in this *we*, in the Text? Surely, we find them not in the sacred Pages of holy Writ, much lesse in this word *We*: But find them we shall, in their own fanatick Pamphlets, blurd with self-justifying; yet, most damnable errours; making the holy Scripture a Nose of Wax, or a Ship-man's hose, any thing, or nothing, to serve their owne turnes; like Saint *Austine's* Heretiques, of whom he thus speaketh, *Scripturas ad suum sensum; non suum sensum ad Scripturas adducunt:* They do not reduce their senses unto the Scripture, when they read; but doe wickedly captivate the Scriptures unto their owne senses and meanings. Let us therefore looke upon the plurall personallity, it containing not a graceleſſe, but a gratious company, such as are

magnum genus, (as *Chrysologus* terms them) of a right *noble stock*: Yea, they are Εὐγενεῖς, *Of the blood-Royall, in a* spirituall sense: For, God is their Father, Christ their elder Brother, the Holy Ghost their Comforter, the Church their Mother, Heaven their inheritance, and Regeneration their Evidence; yet, are they Offenders in many things, and this they doe in humility and sincerity of heart acknowledge. In many things (saith Saint *James*) *we* doe offend: I, an Apostle, and you Professors, even *we*; who are *called, justified, sanctified*, and *redeemed* by the pretious blood of *Jesus Christ*. That the deare Children of God both Ministers, and People have been, are, and shall be Offenders in many things, even to the world's end; not onely my Text, but other places of holy Scripture doe sufficiently declare. Was not *Noah* a man beloved of the Lord, and a Preacher of righteousnesse? yet, was he not inebriated with his owne wine? *Vino captus, qui diluvium fugerat*, saith Saint *Ambrose*, He was freed from a deluge of water, and drowned in a deluge of wine, *Gen.* 9.21. Had not *Lot* his Epithete of *Just*, *Just Lot*? 1 *Pet.* 2. 7, 8. And was not he vexed at the uncleanly conversation of the wicked? And did not he see the Sodomites burnt with fire for their lusts? yet, did not he doe wickedly, and (being delivered) burne with incest? *Joseph* sinned, in Iwearing, *By the life of Pharaoh*, *Gen.* 42. 15. *Aaron* sinned, in making the *golden Calfe* for the *Israelites* to worship, *Exod.* 32.21. And *he* and *Miriam* sinned, in murmuring against *Moses*, *Numb.* 12. 7, 8. The Prophet *Jonah* transgressed in flying from *Joppe* to *Tharsus*, and in justifying his unjust anger for the Gourd. *Moses* (though the Servant of the Lord, and the meekest Man upon the earth) offended in unbelief and anger, *Numb.* 20.12. & 16.15. The Prophet *David* was a man according to God's owne heart, 1 *Sam.* 13.14. and in the state of regeneration; yet, his heart was uncleane, *Psal.* 51. 10. and *he* fell into the sinne of adultery, hypocrisie, murther, and ambition, 2 *Sam.* 11. & 24. *Salomon*, the wisest Man upon the earth, committed folly. *Job* the patientest, yet not altogether to be excused of impatience; nor *Elias* of passion; nor the Sonnes of *Zebedee*, of ambition; nor *Peter* and *Barnabas* of dissimulation, *Gal.* 2. No, nor the blessed *Virgin* her self, of vain-glory. Saint *Peter* was courageous, yet pusilanimous, Confident, yet Diffident; so faithfull

that Christ built his Church upon his Faith; yet denied, and that with execration, his Lord and gracious Redeemer: nay, all Christ's Disciples (though at one time they forsook all to follow him, yet at another time) they all forsooke him and fled. But, why should I thus discover my Father's nakednesse? rather (indeed) would I goe backward and cover the same with the mantle of my pity: Yet, let us not be too lavish in pitying them; For, God hath caused their infirmities to be recorded:

First, to let us understand that both they and we have one and the same God, who was alwaies offended with sinne, were the Persons that wrought it never so great or glorious.

Secondly, to let us know that both they and we have one and the same Physician to cure us of all our maladies, *viz.* the immaculate Lamb Christ Jesus, who *saveth his People from their sinnes*, *Matt.* 1. 21.

Thirdly and lastly, to teach us circumspection and cautelousnesse; to flie from sinne as from a Serpent, and to say to it as *Pharaoh* said to *Moses*, *See that thou see my face no more*; or as *Abraham* to *Lot*, *If thou goe on the right hand I will goe on the left, or if thou go on the left hand, I will go on the right*: For, if the deare Children of God, who have gone before us both in time, and in the graces of the Spirit beare such reproach, by reason their corruptions are registred; what shall we sustaine, who live in a brighter Age, and upon whom the ends of the world are come? But, (alas!) so base is our nature that sinne will be a Jebusite; it will be a constant guest to our house, though it setteth not in the chiefest room; it is bred in the bone, and it will not out of the flesh, untill *Joseph's* bones be carried out of *Egypt*, (*i. e.*) untill we be out of this world. As *Israel* could not passe to *Canaan*, but through the Desart of *Zin*: so we must not look to passe to our spirituall *Canaan*, but through the wildernesse of sinne. Sinners are like Rebels, that not onely revolt, but also keep castle against their Soveraigne, from whence they are not easily removed. *Aristotle* tells us of three things that doe acquire wisdome, *viz.* Nature, Learning, and Exercise: Sure I am, not these; but God's free grace can make us avoid sinne. Philosophers are of opinion, that if the inferiour spheres were not governed and stayed by the highest, the swiftnesse of their motion would quickly fire

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the world: So I may very well hold, that if the affections of God's dearest Children were not moderated by the guidance of his holy Spirit, they would run so farre into sinne, as to precipitate their soules into the black gulfe of eternall destruction; for, our reason is no better than treason, and our affections are no better than infections. We cannot truely say of our selves as *Isidore* too boldly of himselfe; For fourty yeares space (saith he) I found not in my selfe any sinne, no, not so much as in thought, anger, or any inordinate desire: or, as *Alexander de Hales* of *Bonaventure*, His life was so upright, (saith he) that *Adam* seemed not to have sinned in him. No, no, (my Brethren) look upon a Christian, at the best, whilst he liveth in this world, and you may well compare him unto the Arke of the Covenant, which was but a cubit and half high, an imperfect measure, by this you may know his stature; adde what you will, it will be but a cubit and an half: Perfectly imperfect was he, when he began; imperfectly perfect when he ends in all his actions. Therefore (as we doe offend in many things) let us in humility and sincerity of heart acknowledge and confesse the same, (as Saint *James* in my Text) *In many things we doe offend.*

This hath been the constant practise of God's beloved ones: *What is man* (saith *Eliphaz*) *that he should be cleane? and he that is borne of woman that he should be just? Behold, God found no stedfastnesse in his Saints: yea, the heavens are not cleane in his sight,* Job 15. 14, 15. Therefore *Job* acknowledgeth his failings, *Job* 7. 20. and when he came to plead with God for his uprightnesse, did abhorre himselfe, and repented in dust and ashes, *Job* 42. 6. *Nehemiah* maketh a large confession of his own and the Peoples sinnes, *Nehem.* 9. 5, 6, 7. So *Ezra*, and *Daniel*, in the behalf of the People, confesse that righteousnesse belongeth to God; but shame and confusion to themselves, *Ezra* 9. 5, 6, 7. *Dan.* 9. 6, 7. *Salomon* hath his Booke of Acknowledgment, *viz. Ecclesiastes*. *David* confesseth his folly in numbering the People, saying, *I have sinned exceedingly in that I have done, therefore now Lord, I beseech thee, take away the trespasse of thy Servant; for I have done very foolishly,* 2 *Sam.* 24. 10. He confesseth likewise his Adultery with *Uriah's* Wife, and his Murder, in causing her innocent Husband to be slaine: And for these hainous concerns (if I may so speake) so doe

penance every Lords-day in our Congregations where his *Psalms* are preached, read, or sung: For, in how many *Psalmes* hath he recorded his offences with his owne hand! Those that came to *John the Baptist* to be Baptized of him, *came confessing their sinnes*, *Matth.* 3. 6. Saint *Peter* said to Christ, *Goe from me for I am a sinfull man*; and Saint *Paul* saith, *I doe not the good thing, which I would; but the evill which I would not, that doe I*, *Rom.* 7. 19. Nay further, Saint *John* saith, that *we sinne, in saying we have no sinne*, 1 *Joh.* 1. 8. *If we say that we have no sinne, we deceive our selves, and there is no truth in us.* But (peradventure) some will object and say, doth not the same Apostle averre, (1 *Joh.* 3. part of 8. & 9. *v.*) that *he who committeth sinne is of the Devill? And whosoever is borne of God sinneth not: for his seed remaineth in him, neither can he sinne, because he is borne of God?* I shall answer briefly, *To commit sinne* signifieth, not simply to sinne: It importeth not a mixt action, wherein the Sinner is partly willing, partly unwilling; but an absolute resigning of that faculty for the performance of wicked designes. Ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, he which doth settle and set himself to worke wickednesse, is of the Devil: But, *he that is borne of God sinneth not, nor can sinne*: that is, doth not, nor can indulge or cocker his sinne; the one is transported by his owne rebellious will; the other inforced by urgent necessity: the one is carried forward by a prompt and peremptory inclination; the other by violent & coactive temptation: the former sinneth of a premeditate mind; the latter by constraint: doe what we can, whilst we carry about this masse of corruption, sinne will have its residence in us, even in the best of us; but we will not suffer it to reigne in our mortall bodies, that we should obey it in the lusts thereof. If it violently overrule us, we will not willingly let it rule over us: If therefore a poore Sinner can say with the Apostle, *Rom.* 7. 23. I would not willingly doe *that evill which I doe*; *It is the law of my members that rebelleth against the law of my mind, and leadeth me captive to the law of sinne*, he may look with comfort towards the Mercy-seat. For, *Peccata non nocent*, (saith S. *Jerome*) *si non placent*. Our sinnes shall not hurt us, if they doe displease us; for, *in many things we doe offend*. ——

But, why doth not the Apostle say, *we* offend in a few things, but *in many things*, and why in many things, and not in all things,

or every thing? It is resolved in a word, *We* offend, not in a few, but many things; because we have not a few, but many subtile, malitious, vigilant, strong enemies; and, not the least, is our owne inbred corruption: *We* offend, not in all things, or every thing; because the grace of God supporteth us, and his grace is sufficient for us, for by grace are *we* saved, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. *Ephes.* 2. 5. In the best of God's Children there is Nature, Creation, and the first *Adam*, which makes them to offend *in many things*. Againe, there is in them Grace, Regeneration, and the second *Adam*, which makes them not to offend in all things. If *we* thinke, that *we* are too weake by nature to resist and vanquish sinne; let us comfortably assure our selves, that by grace *we* shall be Victors; yea, *more than Conquerours*, through *Jesus Christ*, who hath so freely and dearly loved us. The flesh, or the nature of man (saith Saint *Paul*, *Rom.* 7.) lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, so that *we* cannot doe as *we* would: If *we* would serve God, so holily, cheerfully, and constantly, as the Angels in heaven, *we* cannot, because the flesh lusteth against the spirit: If againe *we* would sinne with full consent of will, so brutishly as the wicked doe, *we* cannot, because the spirit lusteth against the flesh. Let us therefore implore this spirit of Sanctification, and let us beseech the Almighty to drive the *Zanzummims*, our sinnes out of the land of our hearts by the *Israel* of his grace. It is said, that *Hercules* led *Cerberus* in a lease: Oh! let us pray to God to give us power and victory over our monstrous, deformed sinnes, that they may not command *us*, but *we* them: And, if at any time *we* be overtaken in a fault, let our hearts smite us immediately; let us crie to God earnestly for his pardoning, preventing, and persevering grace. Alas! what is our life? is it not as it were a Booke? our birth is the Title-page, our baptisme the Epistle Dedicatory, our groanes and cryings the Epistle to the Reader, our childhood is the Argument and Contents of the whole ensuing Treatise, our life and actions are the Subject, our sinnes and errours are the Faults escaped; therefore let our repentance be the Correction; let not us think our selves *too good* for the office; for, even *we* are Offenders. Again, let us not turne *ego* into *ille*, or *nos* into *vos*; let us not look upon the offences of *others*, and forget our *owne*. The Cock clapt his

wings first to his own sides and awoke himself, before he crowed to awaken *Peter*; so let us say to our selves, *we* have offended, before we say to others, *ye* have offended. It had been good for *Narcissus*, *at non viderat ipse*, that *he* had not seen himselfe; but our greatest happinesse would be in seeing our selves. Let us not be Mole-eyed towards our selves, and Eagle-eyed towards our Brethren, and so turne *Christ's*, *Sed vos pro vobis*, into *Virgils Sic vos non vobis*. Let us not be like *Crates Thebanus*, who is called, *Θυρεπανοίκτης*, *a Dore-opener*; because he used to rush into every mans house (as our English-H-drivers did alate) and there to find fault with whatsoever was amisse. Let us not say as *Peter* did of *John*, *Hic autem quid?* What shall this man doe? as one carefull of other mens Estates; But, let us say, *Domine! quis ego sum?* Lord! what am I? *Domine! miserere mei peccatoris*, Lord! be mercifull to me a Sinner. Lastly, let us, who offend in many things, beware that we want not one thing, namely, a thankfull heart to him, who will not suffer us to offend in all things; but (notwithstanding our many offences) will acknowledge us for his owne, guide and governe us with his grace in this world, and receive us into glory in the world to come. *In many things we do offend*; nay, more, *In many things we offend* [*all*:] which brings me to the last Particular, *viz.* the Delinquents, described by their Generallity, *All*.

It is not said *Ye all*; but *We all*: Here is One, and All; Many, and All; yes, Saints, and All: For, We All are under this *black Red*. Would a *Committee-man*, a *Colonel*, a *Generall*, assume to himselfe such a word of charge, and such a chargeable word as this? No surely, though a *Cobler*: Yet, the word is generall, and (for ought I know) belongeth to a *Generall*: But, shall I say, to a *Thomas*, who would not believe his *Master*? Nay, rather to a blessed *Saint*, (*viz.* Saint *James*) who died (though a *Bishop*) for the honour of his *Master*, *Quis non contremiscat* (saith Saint *Austin*) *cum Apostolus dicit* [Omnes?] *non offenditis, sed offendimus?* Who cannot but tremble, like the heartlesse Deer, to heare the Apostle pronounce this impartiall word [*All*?] and not *ye all*, but *We all* offend? Tremble then we must; for, the Prophet *Isaiah* hath his *Nos omnes* too; *All we, like Sheepe, have gone astray; we have, every one, turned to our owne way*, Esay 53. 6. And, *Pec-*

care,

cave, est mora precandum errare; to sinne is to goe out of our way, like silly Cattle, Sheep especially. Moreover, this [*All*] pricketh, not onely the *Church Militant*, which is *invisible*; but that part also, which is *visible*: For, *a meliori ad pejus valet argumentum*: If *Aaron* maketh a molten Calfe, the *Israelites* will worship it: If the *Commanders* plunder, the *common Souldiers* will steale: If the *Babes of grace* will depose their KING, the *graceleſſe* Babes will murther Him: If *black Saints* have their aberrations, *white Devils* will have their tranſgreſſions; *Who can ſay, I have made my heart clean, I am cleane from ſinne?* Prov.20.9. *Surely, there is no man juſt on the earth, that doeth good, and ſinneth not*, Eccleſ. 7.22. *There is no man that ſinneth not*, 2 Chron.6.36. Wherefore the *Spouſe* of *Chriſt* doth ingenuouſly acknowledge her black hue and ſwart complexion, *Cant.*1.5. And the *Fathers* doe commonly compare her to the *Moone*, and well may they doe ſo, in reſpect of her borrowed light, and ſpotted face: All the beames which ſhe reflecteth to the world, are darted upon her by the Sunne of righteouſneſſe, and yet by reaſon of her unequall temper, in her brighteſt ſhining, ſhe appeareth ſpotty. As a faire face, hath a wart; a goodly pomgranate, a rotten kernell; good wine, lees and dregs; the Sunne, his eclipſe; the Moone, her ſpots: So the viſible Church of Chriſt hath her imperfections and faults: And that too, both in reſpect of 1 Doctrine, and 2 Converſation. *We know but in part*, ſaith S. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.*13.12. *When the Sonne of Man commeth, ſhall he find faith on earth?* ſaith our Saviour, *Luke* 18.8. Againe, for her Converſation, ſhe is like *Jacob's* party coloured ſheep: there will be a ſpeckled breed, ſo long as the flocks caſt their eyes on motly vanities, in the gutters of this world. There will be tares amongſt the wheat, in the ſame field: chaffe with the corne, on the ſame floore, *Mat.*3.12. good fiſh and bad in the ſame net, *Mat.*13.47. And *all*, even *we all* do offend in many things. Was not Saint *Chryſoſtome* blinded with the opinion of Free-will, and *Peter's* Supremacy? did not Saint *Cyprian* hold Rebaptization? did not *Origen* maintaine Univerſall ſalvation of Men and Devils? did not Saint *Auſtin* write doubtfully about Purgatory, and for a while held confidently that Children could not be ſaved without the Lord's Supper? Did not Saint *Jerome* maintaine Virginity above

Marriage?

Marriage? Did not *Tertullian* believe second Marriage unlawfull? *Illiricus* fail about Originall sin? And *Luther* about Consubstantiation? *Cum multis aliis*, &c. Yea, whole Churches have offended in matters of Faith, and good Manners. The *Galatians* erred about Justification: The *Corinthians* about the Resurrection: The *Romanes*, *Colossians* and *Thessalonians*, hadhaughty spirits, brabling Sophisters, and brethren that walked disorderly, *Rom.* 11. 2. 16. *Coloss.* 3. 8. 2 *Thess.* 3. 6. *ver.* 6. & 15. 9. 13. & 17. Were not the seven Churches of *Asia* faulty? *Jezebel* prevailed in *Thyatira*; *Sardis* had a name without *life*; *Pergamus* was tainted with *Baalisme*; and *Laodicea* with *luke-warmnesse*; and *Ephesus* had forsaken her *first Love*. And doth it not appeare, that the visible and glorious Churches of *Jerusalem*, *Alexandria*, and *Antioch*, have grievously erred and offended, if we looke upon the Superstition, Heresies and Atheisme now raigning there?

And God (doubtlesse) permitteth these offences and errours in his Church, that the Elect might be imployed and tried; Reprobates left unexcusable; Gods strength appeare in our weaknesse, and his mercy and justice in such variety of objects; For, *The best of us all doe offend in many things*: And are not we (think ye) much bound to our *Proto parents* for this our fraile and weak condition? Surely, their unlawfull desire of knowledge, brought upon them, and us all, so black ignorance, as that *we know nothing* (as we ought to know) *Job* 8. 9. But we see things, *per transennam*, or, *vimulam*, or (as Saint *Paul* speaketh) *darkly*, *as in a glasse*. Can we truly say (as Saint *Bernard* sometimes) the image of God is neither decreased, nor decreased in us? Or, (as most of the *Schoole-men*) though the actuall image is decayed in us, yet the aptitudinall doth remaine? Place the image of God where you will: If in the Faculties, the Understanding is obscured, and the Will opposite: In the Appetite? that is distracted: In supernaturall graces? those are defaced. Well (therefore) may we conclude with *Epiphanius*, Though there be not an extinction of it in any part, yet there is an inquination in all. Yea, in a word, *Adam being in honour regarded not, but became like the Beasts that perish*: *The Fathers have eaten sowre grapes, and the Childrens teeth are set on edge*: Or rather, their sweet meate hath proved unto us sowre sawce: Our first Parents, with a short breakfast,

have

have brought a surfet upon us all; their Posterity, whereof they cannot recover so long as they doe breath under earths spangled Canopie: None but Christ Jesus alone was free from sinne, who was, Θεάνθρωπος, *God-man*: For, *In many things we offend all.*

Doe *all we* offend in many things? Then justly may we condemne many who offend (shall I say, in great things; in the greatest things?) even in all things.

1. There is a generation as darke as Hell; yet, too too visible in our Climate: How many Sonnes of *Belial* have we amongst us, who feare not God, no, nor reverence man; though Gods *Vicegerent*, and their lawfull *Soveraigne!* How many cursed, seditious *Shebaes*, blowing the tumultuous Trumpets of Rebellion, and saying, we have no part in CHARLES, nor inheritance in the Sonne of JAMES; every man to his Tents, *O England!* How many *Sacrilegious Baltasars*, *Plundering Achans*, *Heart-burning Sauls*, *Covetous Nabals*, *Oppressing Ahabs*, *Whorish Jezebels*, *Temporizing Demasses*, *Fratricideous Cains*, *Regicideous Jehues*, *Bloodthirsty Nimrods*, *Malicious Doegs*, *Backbiting Ziba's*, *Cursing Shimei's*, *Scoffing Chams*, and *Prophane Esaus!* I say againe, Oh how many! The Eccho answers, Many. And these are blacke, without shew of the contrary, to a discerning eye: Short of *Agrippa*, not worthy to be termed, *seeming Christians*: Corrupt are they, and abominable in their doings, drinking iniquity like water, and sinning as it were with Cart-ropes: Yea, *they have sold themselves to worke wickednesse in the sight of the Lord*, and in the sight of men: There is no feare of God, nor shame of men, before their eies: They have made falshood their refuge, and under ungodlinesse are they hid: Therefore shall the Lord raine upon them snares, fire and brimstone, this shall be their portion to drinke: yea, the Lord shall bring upon them destruction; yea, the Lord our God shall destroy them.

2. Againe, there are a sort of People whose waies may seem right, even to a good Man: but their waies are the waies of death: Our Saviour calls them, painted Sepulchers, *Sepulchra, quasi semi-sepulchra, exterius nitida, interius fœtida*, faire without, and foule within. They are like unto Apothecaries Galli-pots, *quorum titulis remedium habent, pixides venenum*, without they have

the title of some excellent preservative; but within, they are full of deadly aconite. Without, they are *Cæsar*; within, *Nero*: hear them, no men better; search and trie them, no men worse: they will have *Jacob*'s voice, but *Esau*'s hand: Outwardly they will be *John*, but inwardly they will be *Herod*: They professe like *Saul*, but practise like *Saithan*: they have their long Prayers, but their shorte preyings. Counterfeit holinesse is their cloake for all manner of Villanies, and the Mid-wife to bring forth their subtilties. The *Eagle* soareth on high, not to flie to heaven; but to gaine her prey upon earth: So, many doe carry a great deale of seeming devotion, and lift up their eyes towards heaven; but they doe it, onely to accomplish with the more ease, safety, and applause, their wicked and damnable designes here on earth. But let such know, that *simbata sanctitas, duplex iniquitas*, counterfeit holinesse is double iniquity; and our Saviour denounceth Eight woes against Hypocrites in *Matth.* 23. Neither (to my present remembrance) could I ever find that he converted any such. *Are thy hands full of blood? make thy many prayers then and see if God will heare thee in the day of thy calamity. Isa.* 1. 15. He that regardeth iniquity in his heart God will not heare; his very prayers and all his outward acts of devotion, in the service of God, shall be turned into sinne unto him.

Thou dost fast (perhaps) but is it to strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickednesse? Thou dost give Almes to the poore (peradventure) sometimes: Thou commest to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper; but is thy heart all this while swolne with ambition, covetousnesse, envy, hatred & malice? assure thy self thy sacrifice is not accepted; for, God will have mercy, and not sacrifice; to doe this is but as the chopping off a Dogges necke. Thou pretendest a reformation, but thou wilt have it purchased by bloody and unlawfull meanes: Marke therefore what the Prophet *Micah* speakes, *Mic.* 3. 10, 11, 12. *They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The Heads thereof judge for reward, and the Priests thereof teach for hire, and the Prophets thereof prophesie for money; yet will they leane upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? no evill can come upon us. Therefore shall Zion for your sake, be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps; and the mount of the house, as the high places of the forrest.* To

build up *Zion* and *Jerusalem*, was (doubtlesse) an acceptable work unto the Lord: but to doe it with blood, injustice, and lies, was so detestable unto him, that he threatens an utter desolation to both *Zion* and *Jerusalem*, for their sakes: Well then, if we finde these Wolves in Sheep-skins, let us (if we can) hang them up; for they are, and will be Wolves still: Sinne they will, and that with a witnesse: Yea, let us pray, that these many black and white Devils, who offend in all things, may be cut off; that we all, who offend in many things, may not offend in any thing: For, *In many things we offend all.*

But doe we all continually offend in many things? And shall we doe so till death? What may we then thinke of those fanatick spirits, who doe ascribe, judgement, without errour; and holinesse, without sinne, unto the most sinfull Sonnes and Daughters of men? Surely, from what we have already heard, we may truly confute, and justly condemne the Church of *Rome* (that *Whore* of *Babylon*) for assuming to her selfe such a garment of purity and infallibility, as to merit and superarrogate Heaven; notwithstanding she hath not left her Whorish tricks, but still brings forth uncleane Children, of an uncleane seed; her infallibility failing, and her purity being impure; that man of sinne, *viz:* the *Pope*, (say some of their owne Writers) cannot sinne, erre, or offend: But, this being openly and apparently false; for some of their *Popes* have beene *Conjurers*, *Sorcerers* and *Inchanters*, *Adulterers*, *Murtherers*, *Heretickes* and *Atheists*; yea (in a word) their *Innocents*, *Nocents*; their *Benedicts*, *Maledicts*; their *Bonifaces*, *Malifaces*, *&c.* Therefore (I say) their *Jesuites* of late have found out a subtile distinction, *viz:* that the *Pope* may sinne, erre and offend in his owne person, as a man, *sed non quatenus Papa*, but not so farre forth as he is *Pope*, *è Cathedrâ*, to define and teach errours. Although we may grant it to be a subtile distinction, yet not a solid one; for if the *Pope* cannot guide his owne faith, how can it be expected that he should guide the faith of the Church? The rule must not onely make strait that which is crooked, but it must be strait it selfe. Moreover, these Romanists deserve to be blamed, for affirming, that the blessed Virgin was pure from all sinne, both Originall, and Actuall: Their words are these; *Our Lady never sinned; our Lady never sinned so much*

as venially in all her life; ſhe exactly fulfilled every tittle of the whole Law, that is, ſhe was without ſinne. That ſhe was not ſo great a Sinner as the reſt of Gods Children, I doe with humble acknowledgment believe; but, that ſhe was without ſinne, her owne expreſſion declares the contrary, in that ſhe ſaid, *my ſpirit rejoyceth in God my Saviour*: If *Chriſt* was her *Saviour*, ſhe muſt of neceſſity be a Sinner.

Well may likewiſe the *Manichees*, *Catheriſts*, or *Puritanes*, be condemned, who (as Saint *Jerome* writeth) avouched, That they neither had ſinned, nor could ſinne; becauſe they were trees of righteouſneſſe, and a good tree (ſaid they) cannot bring forth evill fruit: Therefore we cannot ſee how we ſhould ſinne even in thought. Likewiſe the *Donatiſts*, who dreamed themſelves to be ſo perfect as by their perfection to juſtifie other men, as Saint *Cyprian* telleth us. Alſo, the *Pelagians*, and *Family of Love*; for they were of opinion, that they were ſo free from ſinne, as that they needed not, neither would they vouchſafe to ſay that Petition in the *Lords Prayer*, *Forgive us our treſpaſſes*, (as Saint *Auſtine* teſtifyeth, *lib. 2. cont. Petil. c. 14.*) Moreover, the *Adamites*, who deemed themſelves as pure as *Adam* and *Evah* were before their Fall, (as *Epiphanius* averreth.) And the damnable *Carpocratians*, who blaſphemouſly belched out of their black mouthes and ſulpherous breaths, that they were as holy as *Chriſt Jeſus* himſelfe, (as *Irenæus* affirmeth, *lib. 1. c. 24.*) I might here point out unto you many more ſinful-ſinleſſe *Juſtitiaries*, as the *Novatians*, *Jovinians*, *Enthuſiaſts*, *Antinomiſts*, *Browniſts*, *Barrowiſts*, *Independents*, and *Millenaries*: But, it is not my deſire to lead you any longer in theſe crooked paths; for whoſoever walketh in them ſhall not know peace: neither will I detaine you in the barren wilderneſſe of vaine man's phariſaicall conceits, where you may (doubtleſſe) be ſcratcht and torne with thornes and briers: Rather will I bring you into a ſpecious garden where you may have choice of fragrant flowers for your owne utility and conſolation. Seeing then, *In many things we offend all.*

Ubi debita conſideratio? Where is our due conſideration? Have all Gods deare Children their frailties and deviations? Is his Church viſible and inviſible poſſeſſed with an *Ignis fatuus* that leads

leads out of the way? Are his choſen, ſubject to many aberrations and tranſgreſſions? And ſhall not *we*, even *all we* of *England*, who were ſometimes members of the moſt glorious, and envied *Church* in the Chriſtian World, *Search and trie our waies and turne unto the Lord our God? Gather your ſelves, even gather you, O Nation not worthy to be beloved, before the decree come forth, and ye be as chaffe, that paſſeth in a day, and before the fierce wrath of the Lord come upon you, and before the day of the Lords anger come upon you, Zeph.* 2. 1, 2. Let me ſpeak to all the *Tribes* of *Iſrael*, to all the ſtates and conditions of *England*; to you of *Judah*, the *Princes*; to you of *Benjamin*, the *Counſellours*; to you of *Aſſur*, the *Merchants*; and to you of *Levi*, the *Prieſts*: yea, to you all of what ranke or quality ſoever. Let me aske you, Have not all of you offended? nay, doe not ye ſtill offend in many things? If not, what meaneth the lowing of the Oxen, and the bleating of the Sheep? What may we underſtand by thoſe ſtrong cries which aſcend up to heaven for vengeance to fall downe upon us? You that turne *Bethel* into *Beth-aven*, the houſe of *God* into a den of Thieves: You, that rob the *Levites* of their portion, devouring whole Churches, Steeples and all, and have the bells jingling at your heeles, doe not ye offend? You, that cauſe judgement, and juſtice to grow up as hemlock in the furrowes of the field, doe not ye offend? You that take darkneſſe for light, and light for darkneſſe; bitter for ſweet, and ſweet for bitter: You that have ſpoken words, ſwearing falſly in making a Covenant: You that ſwore to make your KING glorious, the richeſt *Prince* in *Chriſtendome*, to be feared abroad and to be loved at home: You, that declared and proteſted, that you did not fight againſt the Power and Perſon of the KING, onely againſt his evill *Councell*: You likewiſe that declared, [calling heaven and earth to record of your reall intentions] that you would re-inthrone Him and reſtore Him to His juſt Rights, have not ye offended? For, doth not he, that provoketh him to anger (onely) ſinne againſt his owne ſoule? You, who (through ambition) have trod upon the *Crowne*, and trampled upon the *Scepter*, and would not be ſubject to ſuperiority: You, who (through covetouſneſſe) have ſequeſtred, and plundered mens Eſtates, and (to fill your unſatiable deſires) have been prodigall in ſhedding your Bre-

threns blood: Let me aske (I pray) have not you offended? nay, do not you still offend? Let me aske you of the *Parliament & Assembly*; Have not you offended *God*, your *King*, the *Church*, the *Common-wealth*, this whole *Nation*, & your own *Consciences*? shall I say in doing no good, or rather, in doing hurt? shall I doubt, ye have been the Chief Instruments, to bring upon us, and your selves (through *meum* and *tuum*) all the *Interjections* of woe and lamentation?

Have not Councels erred and offended, even in matters of faith? Was it not ordained by a Councell, that if any man did confesse that Jesus was the Christ, he should be excommunicate? Was there not a Councell gathered to suppresse Christ and his Doctrine? Did not a Councell consult how they might take Jesus by subtilty and kill him? Did not a Councell seek for false Witnesse to put him to Death? Was not Jesus bound, led away, and delivered to *Pilate* by a Councell? A Councell judged our Saviour to be both a Deceiver and a Blasphemer. A Councell corrupted the Souldiers, and willed them to tell a lie. *Peter* and *John* were withstood by a Councell, and not suffered to preach. And a Councell caused the Apostles to be beaten. Arrianisme was confirmed by the Councell of *Ariminum*, as Saint *Jerome* affirmeth. The Councell of *Trent* made the Traditions and workes of fraile sinfull Men equivalent to the sacred Scriptures. The second Councell of *Nice* established the adoration of Images. The Councell of *Lateran* clipt the wings of the prerogative of Princes to advance the Pope and Clergy above them. I might mention many more, besides the Councels that have been of our owne Nation in our owne Kingdome from time to time: let it suffice, that the consideration of these things ought to make us believe and embrace nothing ordained by Men, unlesse the same be consonant and agreeable to the word of God. I am sure Saint *Hilarie* (well weighing the premises) in his Epistle to *Constantius* calls the Synod of *Mediolane*, *The Malignant Synagogue*: And *Gregory Nazianzen* (in his 42 *Ep.* to *Procopius*) openly pronounced, that, He never saw any good end of a Councell. They are (ordinarily) like *Jeremiah's* figgs, if good, very good; if bad, very bad. Let us therefore, in the towring thoughts of our owne purity and infallibility, looke downe upon the black feet

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of our frailty and infirmity: For, *In many things we offend all.*

But, doth Saint *James* acknowledge this? *Ubi confessio nostra?* where is our confession? We decline sinne through all the cases, (saith one witily:) In the *Nominative*, by *Pride*; in the *Genetive*, by *Luxury*; in the *Dative*, by *Simonie*; in the *Accusative*, by *Detraction*; in the *Vocative*, by *Adulation*; in the *Ablative*, by *Extortion*: And shall we not acknowledge them, in any case? *God* gave shame for sinne, and boldnesse for confession; and, when sinne is committed, shall shame be absent? and, when it should be confest, shall shame be present? Shall we be like unto the *Elephant*, who will not drinke of cleer water in the limpid fountaine, lest he should see his deformity? or, like old *Gentle-women* growne out of date, who will not trouble themselves to behold their faces in a glasse, because (they know) they shall see nothing better than hollow eyes, pale cheeks, and a wrimkled countenance? Doe we all offend in many things, and shall we hide our selves from the light, and say we offend not in any thing? Let *God* be True, and every Man a Liar, as it is written. Let us not hide our sinnes, either by excusing them, with *Aaron*, *Exod.* 32. 24. or by colouring them with faire pretenses and distinctions, as the *Jewes*. *Jer.* 22. 14. or as *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 15. 20, 21. Or by translating them from our selves, and laying the blame upon others, as *Adam*, *Gen.* the 3. Or by defending them, or by extenuating them, or lastly, by denying them, as the *Harlot*, *Prov.* 20. 30. Let us not say, as those in Saint *Bernard*'s dayes, *Non feci; si feci, non malè feci; si malè feci, non multum malè; si multum malè, non malâ intentione; si malâ intentione, tamen aliena persuasione.* I did it not; if I did it, I did it not ill in doing it; If I did ill in doing it, not very ill; If very ill, not with an ill intent; If with an ill intent, it was by another's perswasion. But let us, with *David*, ingenuously acknowledge our transgressions, and let our sinnes be ever before us: For, there is no remission without confession, but upon our confession *God* will forgive. *Deus tegat vulnera, noli tu* (saith Saint *Austine*, in *Psal.* 31.) *Si tu tegere volueris, embescens medicus non curabit*; Let God hide thy wounds, doe not thou; if thou wilt needs hide them, the Chirurgeon, as one ashamed at thy folly, will not cure thee. God will not ponre in the balme of his mercy till we let

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out our corruption by confession. *God*, with *Elisha*, demands vessels empty with confession before he will come in. If we set our sinnes in order before our faces, *God* will cast them behind his back; but, if we cast them behind our backs, *God* will set them before his face. If we remember them, *God* will forget them: If we forget them, *God* will remember them. *Solvit criminum nexus, verecunda confessio peccatorum*, saith Saint *Ambrose*, *lib. 2. de penit.* the knot of our sinnes is loosed by an humble confession of them. *Ipsa agnitio culpæ est impetratio veniæ*, saith Saint *Bern. cap. 11. Med.* the acknowledgment of the fault, doth impetrate pardon. *If we confesse our sinnes* (saith Saint *John*, 1 *Joh.* 1. 9.) *God is faithfull and just to forgive us our sinnes, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousnesse.* It was a very easie physick which the Man of *God* prescribed unto *Naaman*, (2 *Kings* 5. 10.) *viz.* to go and wash seven times in the River *Jordan*, and to be cleansed from his leprosie: And surely (my Beloved) we may stand and wonder at this, if our leprosie were not as ill; nay, worse, by how much the soule is better than the body: yet, we have the same physick prescribed, onely confesse, and be cleane. Yea, (saith *David*, *Psal.* 32. 5.) *I said I will confesse my sinne, and thou forgavest the punishment of my sinne.* Note, that this speech of the Prophet implies two things: First, the difficulty of the act of confession; it must not be done hand over head, but upon due deliberation, and serious consideration. [*I said I will.*] Secondly, *God*'s readinesse to forgive: I did but say, that I would confesse, and thou forgavest: *Nondum pronunciat, sed solùm promittit, & Deus dimittit, &c.* saith *Cassiodore* upon the place. As yet he utters not his confession, but onely promiseth to doe it, and God accepts. As yet the word is not in his mouth that man may heare his confession, but *God* heareth and receiveth him into favour. Oh therefore (deare Brethren) let us ascend up into the Tribunall of our mind, even against our selves, and place our selves guilty before our selves, that *God* may place us before him. For, *In many things we offend all.*

But, is our condition thus transgressive, and therefore deplorable? *Ubi sum Patientia nostra?* Where is then our Patience? When *Samuel* told *Eli* from the mouth of God, that the wickednesse of his house should not be purged with *sacrifice*, or *burnt-*

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offering, for ever; he answered both meekly and patiently, *It is the Lord, let him doe what seemeth to him good, 1 Sam. 3. 18.* When *David's* Sonne, even rebellious *Absalom*, conspired to take his Fathers Crowne from his head, and his head from his shoulders; *David* fled from *Jerusalem* with this patheticall and patient resolution, (2 *Sam.* 15. 25. 26.) *If I shall finde favour in the eies of the Lord, he will bring me againe, and shew me both it, and the Tabernacle thereof: But, if he say thus, I have no delight in thee: Behold, here am I, let him doe to me as seemeth good in his eies.* When *Shimei* the Sonne of *Gera* came out, and cursed, saying, *Come forth, come forth, thou man of bloud, and man of Belial: The Lord hath brought upon thee all the bloud of the house of Saul, &c.* 2 *Sam.* 16. 7, 8. What said *David* to *Abishai*, who would have cut off this *Miscreants* head, *ver.* 11. *Behold, my Sonne, which came of mine owne bowels, seeketh my life: then how much more may this Sonne of Jemini? Suffer him to curse, for the Lord hath bidden him: It may be the Lord will looke on my teares, and doe me good for his cursing this day.* And marvell not to heare him thus speaking, when you throughly weigh that ingenuous acknowledgement of his (in *Psalme* the 119. 75.) saying, *I know thy judgements are right, and thou hast afflicted me justly.* Yea upon the consideration of this, in the depth of his misery, would not mount up so high as to plead with his Maker, and contend with his punishments Inflictour; but laid his hand upon his mouth, and would not open it, unlesse to say, *Though thou killest me, yet will I trust in thee;* And, *I abhorre my self, and repent in dust and ashes.* Our stripes are not according to our sins; for, if God should beat us with as many rods, as we have grieved him with sinnes, he should adde yet ten times more to our greatest afflictions: We goe astray like sheep; shall we backe or bleate, when God sends forth his dogge (*affliction*) to bring us home againe? Will the dutifull Child be outragious against his loving Father for a slight correction, when as (for his grosse offences) he deserves an heavy punishment? Will the skilfull Mariner be offended at a boysterous wind, which (notwithstanding) to him is a favourable gale to bring him to his wished Port? God (yea, our gracious God) dealeth with his Children, as *Joseph* with his Brother *Benjamin*; *Joseph* put his Cup into *Benjamin's* sacke, that he might returne againe to him: so God

causeth his *Benjamins* (his Children) to drinke of the cup of tribulation, that (when they have offended by riding full speed after their owne vaine imaginations) they may make a gentle retreat (through patience) into the communicative lines of Gods free acceptance. We are empty of goodnesse; no marvell then, if God dealeth with us, as the Gardiner with the Buckets of his Well, who brings them downe, that he may fill them: God casts us downe by affliction, that he may raise us up full of the grace of patience. In the time of prosperity, the regenerate do hold forth the white Rose of innocency; but in the time of adversity, the red Rose of submissive meeknesse. Are we (therefore) in any adversity, distresse, or calamity, either in respect of health, wealth, friends, freedome, good-name, nay, life it selfe? Let us (I beseech you) say with the holy Church (*Mic.* 7. 9.) *I will beare the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.* Nay, seeing affliction brings us home to God, let us come home unto, yea, into our selves, and *possesse our soules with patience*, which (as *Tertullian* speakes) is, *animarum anima*, the soule of soules; for, as we possesse our bodies by our soules, so we possesse our soules by patience: Yea (Beloved) as we all offend in many things, let us all be obedient in this one thing, *viz: To runne with patience the race that is set before us, looking towards Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith*: For, *In many things we offend all.*

But, is this the height of our cerrene perfection, and the summity of our earthly glory, to have our coate of *Or*, and our conversation *Sable*; to be graced with the *Title* of *Saints*, and to be disgraced with the *Tract* of *Malefactours*; to be all endowed with integrity, and yet all to be brim-full of infirmity? Oh then! *Qualis imitatio nostra?* How should our imitation be qualified? *Greg: Naz:* in his panegyricall Oration in the behalfe of Saint *Basil*, saith, that his Parishioners so dearly and truly affected, and so wonderfully admired him for his virtues, as every one's care and vigilancy was unanimously to imitate whatsoever was in him. And *Diodorus Siculus* (*lib.* 5.) declares, that the *Ethiopians* would imitate their Princes, even in their naturall defects and mutilations: Would God my fellow-subjects of *England*, that cry up Christianity so highly (indeed none can doe more) would imitate the virtues, or rather, excellent graces of their unparallelled

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gracious Soveraigne: Yet know, that *Humanum est errare*, and, *In many things we offend all.* Let us not therefore draw the infirmities and deformities of others in *lively* colours, and pourtray their comely features in *dead*: Let not others evill actions become a copy for us to write after; but (as Saint *Austin* doth counsell us, saying) *Si quid boni, debito est imitandum; si quid malè, debito est fugiendum*: If we see any good in other men, let us imitate them in that; if any evill, let us flaun and avoyd them in that. Agreeable hereunto is that counsell of Saint *Paul*; 1 *Cor.* 11. 1. *Be ye Followers of me* (saith he) *as I am of Christ*; i. e. So farre forth as I follow Christ, so farre forth doe ye follow me, and no further; for I have my frailties and imperfections; and the best of us, that are Ministers, are but men, and subject to the like passions with you. If a man should finde a piece of gold covered over with dirt, will he possesse himselfe of the dirt, and throw away the gold? A Scholler that hath a copy set him, which is well penned, but somewhat defaced with certaine blots; In imitating the copy, will he imitate the blots? As (therefore) the *Pilot* looks to the *Northerne Starre* to bring him to his wished *Port*: so let our eies be fixed upon the good actions of our brethren (for our imitation) to bring us to the *Haven* of eternall happinesse: For, *In many things we offend all.*

Againe, Are all in this sad predicamentall relation? *Ubi Timor, ibi Terror?* Where is our Feare, and Dread? It is proper to God (saith *Aristotle*) to doe what he will; to man, to doe what he can: But now the World is turned topsy-turvy; God doth what he can, and man what he will: Every man will be a law of liberty unto himselfe; and that which should be unto him for his wealth he makes an occasion of falling; yea, of violent rushing into sinne, as the Horse into the battle.

Most men will sweare, nay, shall their oathes drop out of their mouthes, like *Saul's* sword out of his sheath? Rather, they will send them forth like a flock of birds, hundreds together, because *Joseph* swore by the life of *Pharaoh*. They will wallow in the stinking puddle of drunkennesse, and sensuality, because *Noah* was overtaken with his owne Wine. They will robbe, and plunder, and levell the estates of their brethren, because the *Israelites* (though by an especiall warrant from *God*, for their good service)

vice) robb'd the Ethnick *Egyptians*. They will account uncleannesse to be but a veniall sinne, because *David* committed adultery. They say not, we *are*, but, we *will* offend: like unto *Cesar's jacta est alea*, fall backe, fall edge; we *will* persist in our sinnes: Or, like *Catiline*, who when he had fired the City of *Rome* with his conspiracies, had no more grace then to say, *Incendium meum ruinâ extinguam*, I will quench the fire I have kindled with a finall ruine; I will adde worse to evill, thirst to drunkennesse, and leave the successe of my wicked and ungracious actions to the extreamest adventures. Is not this a witting, wilfull, and presumptuous offending? Surely this not a stumbling, and a falling into sin; for, *Praeventio dici non potest* (saith Saint *Jerome*) *cùm quid praemeditatò sit*: That man cannot be said to be prevented, who doth any thing upon serious premeditation. And shall we sinne, that grace may abound? God forbid. If we goe into sinne, as *Sisera* into *Jael's* Tent, it will smite us to the earth. If we allow our selves any one sinne, as taking encouragement from the infirmities of the Saints, God will blot us out of the Booke of life. If we suffer our sinnes to come one on the neck of another, like the Messengers of *Job*, our punishments must needs follow, like the plagues of *Egypt*. If we thinke to please God, in pleasing our perverse nature, the anger of the Lord will smoke in fury against us therefore. Let (therefore) the fallings of the Saints be our rising, their sinnes our motives to amendment of life, and their transgressions make us more watchfull over our waies, more suspicious of our weaknesse, and more forward to flee to God for his assistance in the way to Heaven. If this be done to the green tree, what to the dry? If to the best, what to the bad? If God suffers his deare Children to fall into sinne, let us looke narrowly to our selves, and walke cautelously and circumspectly in all our waies, and (as much as lyeth in us) shun all occasions of evill; yea, let us worke out our salvation with feare and trembling; and pray to our gracious God, with the heart and words of *David*, *Psal.* 19. *Keepe thy Servant from presumptuous sinnes, lest they get the dominion over me; so shall I be undefiled and innocent from the great offence*: For, *In many things we offend all*.

Moreover, are we all found guilty before *God's Tribunall* of justice? *Ubi fiducia nostra?* where is our faith and confidence? Why

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doe not we flie to his seat of mercy? when we doe approach *thar*, with true faith and repentance, we shall assuredly obtaine the free pardon and forgivenesse of all our sinnes. Our teares of contrition, by the mercies of *God* through the pretious blood and merits of Jesus Christ, shall wash us throughly from our sinnes. The blood of Christ will make our scarlet, crimson sinnes, as white as snow and wooll. Though a man (in persecution) deny Christ, and renounce his Religion; yet he may be restored and repent, as *Peter*, *Luke* 22. 32. Although a man be a great Idolater, Sorcerer, or given to Witchcraft, yet God may receive him into mercy, as he did *Manasses*, 2 Chron. 33. Some among the *Corinthians* were Fornicators, Adulterers, Wantons, and Buggerers, Thieves, Covetous, Drunkards, Raylers, and Extortioners; yet, were they *washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 11. None are exempted from pardon, but such as totally and finally deny Christ, *Matth.* 10. 37. or, such as are guilty of a universall, totall and finall Apostacy and Impenitency, *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6. Or, (lastly) such as wilfully and maliciously renounce the known truth. Let us with comfort assure our selves, there is hope in store for great and heinous Offenders; (contrary to the grosse opinion of the *Novatians* and others, who teach that sinnes committed after a mans conversion are unpardonable) for, though we offend in many things, we remaine *God's* Children still: for, *In many things we offend all.*

Saint *Jerome* propoundeth a fit question out of those words of *Salomon* (*Prov.* 24. 16.) *A just man falleth seven times and riseth up againe*, and he answers it as comfortable, *viz. Si justus, quomodo cadit? si cadit, quomodo justus? Nunquam amittit nomen justitiæ, qui resurgit per pœnitentiam*; If he be a righteous man, how comes it to passe that he falleth? If he falleth, how can he be a righteous man? He never loseth (saith he) the name of a righteous man, that riseth againe by repentance. Who will say that that man's hands are dirty, who, (but even now) washed them cleane? Wherefore, let us not despaire of mercy and forgivenesse, and say with *Cain*, *My sinne is greater than can be pardoned*: If we doe, we deserve Saint *Austine's* objurgation, *Mentiris Cain, mentiris in gutture*, thou liest *Cain*, thou liest in thy throat,

Gods mercies are more than thy sinnes, and the Lords compassion greater than thy transgression. It was a greater sinne in *Judas* (saith he) to hang himselfe, than to betray his Lord and Master. God hath but drops of justice; but flouds of mercy: one day for judgement, but a whole yeare for pardon. *Christ Jesus hath fully satisfied the justice of God, Coloss.* 2. 14. he hath cancelled the bond of our debts, and, *washed us in his pretious blood, Revel.* 1. 5. He was punished that we might be pardoned, he was condemned that we might be justified: The Lords ever-flowing and over-flowing fountaine, *is still set open for sinne and for uncleannesse, Zach.* 13. 1. Where the Spirit and the Spouse say, *Come*, and let him that is a thirst, come, and let whosoever will, come, and take of the water of life freely, *Revel.* 22. 17. *Come unto me* (saith our Saviour) *all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will ease you.* Behold, he sweetly invites us, [*Come:*] he plainly directs us [*to me:*] he strongly incites us, [*all ye that are weary and heavy laden:*] and he freely promiseth, [*and I will ease you.*] *O quantum amoris!* Oh what, and how much love! It is *mandatum amoris*, (saith Saint *Bernard*) a commandement sugred with love; *Dulcis Domini, dulce mandatum*, a sweet commandement, proceeding from a sweet Lord and Master. Let us therefore flie to this rock of defence, and fountaine of consolation, in our most bitter agonies; yea, when the sorrowes of hell and death are comming upon us. It is said of the Woman in the Gospel, who was troubled with a bloody Issue, that she came behind Christ and touched the hemme of his garment. Why (saith a Father) did she not come before him, or, on one side of him; but behind him? Because (saith he) she would have Christ between God and her: So, let us get Christ between God and us, by a true and lively faith, and then we shall be sure to find him unto us a mercifull Mediatour, Intercessour, and gracious Redeemer. And let us say confidently and comfortably with Saint *Anselme*, *Etsi Domine, ego commisi unde me damnare potes, tu tamen non amisisti unde me salvare potes:* O blessed Lord, though I have committed those transgressions, for which thou mayst justly damne me: Yet I know thou hast not lost those compassions by which thou mayst save me. Thou hast mercy for us all, who doe not sinne through malitious wickednesse. And

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thy mercies are not a few, but many, because, *In many things we offend all. Have mercy* (therefore) *upon us* (*O Lord*) *after thy great goodnesse, according to the multitude of thy mercies, doe away our offences, &c.*

Lastly, (to summe up all in few words, lest I my selfe should offend too, in pressing too much upon your patience) are we thus abased, through our owne inherent corruption, and daily transgressing, and shall not we therefore now be throughly ashamed? *Quale est regulatio nostra?* What manner of Christian submission doe we carry towards the set rule of God, and that lawfull Authority, set up and confirmed by him? What is our carriage and deportment towards our Maker, and towards Man; towards our heavenly Father, and our earthly Brethren? May not I aske, *Ubi est humilitas, & charitas nostra?* Where is our Humility, and Charity? First, where is our Humility? Doe we yeild unto our Inferiours? Doe we give place to our Equals? or rather, Doe we not insult over our Betters; our Betters, both in the phrase of the World, and in the language of *Canaan*; our Betters, in riches and honours, and in grace and goodnesse? Is not that in our daily practise (touching the Magistracy and Ministry) for which *Korah* and his company perished, though they did but utter, and that but once too, against *Moses* and *Aaron*, saying, *Ye take too much upon you? Numb.* 16. 3. Are not many of us like unto *Pompey* and *Cæsar*; for, *Pompey* could abide no Equall, and *Cæsar* could suffer no Superiour? Alas! How vainly are we puft up with a strong conceit of our owne [*crooked*] uprightnesse, and [*sinful*] holinesse! How doe we vaunt and boast of the good we doe, of the goods we have and of the victories we obtaine! Yet, if we would trie our selves by the touch-stone of Gods holy word, we should find our selves unprofitable Servants, and be enforced to acknowledge, that, *In many things we offend all.*

Dionysius thought his God had bleft him for robbing *Æsculapius* his Temple; because he had a favourable and prosperous gale: So, many doe vaunt proud of their owne [*sworn*] innocency; because they are still prosperous and successfull in all their wicked and unjust designes. As if the successe should infallibly prove the justnesse of the cause, and the justice of the

act.

act. Surely, if so, the Turke may proudly maintaine his Mahometane Religion to be the true, and his bloody and abominable conversation to be unblamable: For, (through the Christians divisions) with his bow and sheild he hath conquered the greatest part of Christendome. The Laodiceans were proud of their condition; They said, *they were rich, and increased in goods, and had need of nothing, Revel.* 3. 17. yet, were they *wretched, and miserable, and poore, and blind, and naked.* The proud *Pharisee* would cast up the number of his good deeds, with, *I thanke thee that I am not as other men, or as this Publican.* But, (for all that) he was so faulty, and the more for that; that he was condemned, and the faulty *Publican* through his humility was justified. It is (doubtlesse) farre better to be humbly sinfull, then proudly holy; for, to be poore in spirit, is to be rich in soule. I beseech you therefore (my deare Brethren) *Be not many Masters, knowing, that we shall receive the greater condemnation, Jam.* 3. 1. for, (consider) πολλὰ, *In many things we offend all.*

It is as lawfull to be *Masters*, as to be *Fathers*; but, we must not be ambitious, vain-glorious, intruding, usurping *Masters*, such as doe go before they are sent; such as, without a lawfull call, rule, or warrant, doe take upon them (like proud temerarious *Phaetons*) to guide the *Chariot* of the *Common-wealth*, and *Church*. Saint *Austine*, the *Ordinary Glosse*, *Bede*, *Luther*, &c. doe understand by these *Masters*, such as doe take upon them to teach others, when as they themselves are so ignorant, as that they need to be taught. Saint *James* wrote this *Epistle* to his Countrymen that were converted and dispersed, who though they were in some measure Proficients in *Christ's* Schoole; yet, would he dehort them from too much forwardnesse in undertaking the instructing of others: And that, because this their ambition would bring upon them the greater condemnation; and he doth illustrate, how, for, saith he, *In many things we offend all.*

All of us deserve condemnation, or judgement, for our many offences: but, they who sinne in this high nature, doe deserve and shall assuredly receive the greater judgement, or condemnation.

Let not then the *Shrub* think it self as good as the *Cedar*: Let not the feet stand in the place of the head: Let every one be

content with that calling or condition of life which God hath bestowed on him: Let him not be a *Bishop* in another man's *Diocesse*; but let every man move in his owne Orbe. If thou beest a *Mechanick*, or *Trades-man*, doe not take upon thee to be a *Divine*: If thou findest thy selfe furnished with spirituall gifts, use them to the edification of thy family: Insult not, intrude not, usurpe not over, nor into the Ministery: *Be not many Masters*; nay, *be not any Masters*, in this sense: But let us be clothed with humility, and in lowlinesse of minde, thinke another mans gifts better than our own: Let us not be high-minded, but feare; and walke humbly with our God, and he will exalt us; he will give us his grace here, and glory hereafter. But if we will be ambitious, and goe beyond the bounds and limits that God hath set us, we shall have *Lucifer*'s doome, and receive the greater condemnation: For, *In many things we offend all.*

Againe, *Ubi Charitas nostra?* Where is our *Charity*? What is become of those noble pair of Lovers *David* & *Jonathan*, who had but one heart? *Pilades* and *Orestes*, who had but one life (the one being dead, the other died also?) *Ruth* and *Naomi*, who could not be parted? *Basil* and *Nazianzen*, of whom it is said, *Anima una erat inclusa in duobus corporibus*, One soule was included in two bodies? They are dead, and (in truth) so is our love. In the *Primitive times* there was so much love amongst the *Christians*, that it was, *ad stuporem Gentilium*, to the astonishment of the *Heathen*; insomuch that they would point with the finger, with an *Ecce ut invicem se diligunt!* See, see, oh how entirely do the Christians love one another! But, in these daies there is so little love amongst us, that it is, *ad pudorem Christianorum*, to the shame of *Christians*; for (as learned *Zanchy* speakes) *Ecce ut invicem se oderunt*; Behold, how they hate one another, revile, persecute, and murther one another.

May not I truly complaine (with Saint *Chrysostome*) and say;

Ὦ τῆς ὠμότητος, Ὦ τῆς ἀπονοίας, Ὦ τῆς ἀπανθρωπείας,

O the cruelty! O the savageness! O the inhumanity of us Christians! We shew our selves to be borne in *Thebes*, and not in *Athens*, and to be of the true *Cadmean* brood, because we take so much delight in killing and destroying one another. That Poet

 both

both wittily and truly divided the World into foure ages, *viz.* the golden, the silver, the leaden, and the iron age: And surely, if ever any people lived in this last age, we of *England* (especially) doe at this time; for, if we looke for mercy, behold cruelty; if for justice, behold oppression; if for righteousnesse, behold a cry; if for love and charity, behold envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitablenesse; from which, yea, from all which (it shall be my daily *Letanie* to say) *Good Lord deliver us.*

Shall not we that are *Christians*, consider one another, to provoke unto Love? Shall not we lay to heart our owne erring condition, that we may the more commiserate those that doe sinne against us? *Be not many Masters* (saith Saint *James*) i.e. (as *Piscator* and *Parens*, &c.) doe not over-strictly marke, and then severely censure, and rashly condemne the words and actions of your brethren, and afterwards them for those, backbite not, detract not, defame not, slander not, nor insult over them for their transgressions; for, *In many things we offend all. Let him that standeth, take heed lest he fall*; and let him remember, That *there shall be judgement mercilesse, to him that will shew no mercy*: And, *Nihil ad misericordiam sic inclinat* (saith Saint *Austin*) *quantum propria periculi consideratio*: Nothing doth make a man so inclinable to mercy and compassion, as the consideration of the danger himselfe is in continually, and what he hath already justly deserved at Gods hand. The sight of the eye (saith *Aristotle*) hath no colour, that so it may discerne all colours: So, if we were not guilty of sinne our selves, it might be more tollerable for us to pry into the lives and conversations of others, and to shew them no pity, who will make themselves so filthy: But far be it from us to throw stones at others, when as we deserve to be stoned our selves: Let us not be so nasty, as to lay our filthy uncleane hands on the freckled faces of our brethren. *Brethren*, saith Saint *Paul*, Gal. 6. 1. *if a man be fallen by occasion, into any fault, ye which are spirituall, restore such a one with the spirit of meeknesse*, (καταρτίζετε, doe unto him, as a *Chyrurgion* unto his Patient, who hath a legge or an arme dislocated, use him tenderly and gently) *considering thy selfe, least thou also be tempted*. Such a construction Saint *Bernard* made of the fall of his Brother; for he wept bitterly, using these words, *Ille hodie, & ego cras*; he hath fallen

fallen this day, and I not unlikely to fall to morrow: So when we see others fall into sin, let us exhort and admonish, reprove gently, direct wisely, and comfort without flattery: However, let us mourne, and pray for them. *Whosoever walketh according to these rules, peace shall be upon him, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God:* For, *In many things we offend all.*

Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men. Amen, Amen.

ERRATA.

PAg. 4. lin. 24. for *fight*, reade *sit*. Pag. 6. lin. 6. for *Semim*, r. *Semim*. Pag. 6. lin. 18. for c. 7. r. 6te. If thou findest any more litterall faults, I pray thee passe by, or amend them.

FINIS.